LIQUID DRINKING ASSEMBLAGE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to dispensers for potable liquids, more specifically, to apparatus for conveying more than one liquid into the mouth discretely and simultaneously.

2. The Prior Art

When eating solid foods, it is common to simultaneously place more than one food into the mouth, i.e. meat and potato on a fork. This practice allows the eater to combine foods to satisfy his or her personal tastes. By virtue of the integrity of solid food, it is also possible for the eater to place additional food in the mouth before swallowing. An example might be having meat in the mouth, then taking a bite of bread, chewing and swallowing both. This allows the eater to spontaneously combine foods in the mouth to suit his or her tastes.

In contrast to solid foods, it is difficult to take in a second beverage while one is already in the mouth. A person takes drink by either lifting the drink container to the mouth or by using a straw to draw the beverage into the mouth. In the former case, it is extremely difficult to take a second drink before swallowing the first mouthful—when the mouth is opened to take the second drink, the beverage already in the mouth will spill out. And in the latter case, it is very awkward to try to put the straw back into the mouth before swallowing the first mouthful. Either the straw must be pushed between clenched lips or the head must be tilted backwards to keep the beverage from spilling out.

One solution is to use two straws. There are several disadvantages to this. First, one must find two straws that are appropriate relative to each other. They may not have the necessary diameters or lengths. In addition, because the straws are not joined together, it is awkward to keep them fixed relative to each other, should it be desired.

Another solution is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 3,260,462, issued to Smaczny. Smaczny discloses a forked drinking straw, where there are two legs and a central tube. Each leg is inserted into a different container and the liquids are mixed either in the central tube or in a mixing chamber located at the junction of the legs and central tube prior to reaching the mouth. There are situations where mixing the liquids before reaching the mouth is not desirable. An example of such a case is when the combination creates an effervescent beverage, where, because of gas pressures, it would be dangerous to create the beverage in the confined space of a straw. Another example is when it is desired to taste the flavor of the different liquids separately and then combined.

Taste buds of a single type are grouped together and located in particular areas of the mouth. It is occasionally desirable to direct different components of a beverage to different locations in the mouth to take advantage of the location of particular types of taste buds. The Smaczny device will not work for this purpose because the beverage components are mixed prior to reaching the mouth. It is possible to use two separate straws for this purpose, but it is very awkward to hold the straws in fixed position relative to each other and relative to locations in the mouth and containers.

Thus, there is a continuing need for a device that can be used by a person to drink more than one liquid simultaneously such that the liquids are combined in the mouth and that can direct different liquids to different locations in the mouth simultaneously.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide an assemblage that allows a person to ingest liquids from several receptacles simultaneously while preventing liquid from one receptacle from entering any other receptacles.

The drinking assemblage consists of a plurality of conduits joined so as to direct isolated streams of the liquids from receptacles into the mouth. Each conduit is composed of a material rigid enough so that the conduit will not bend over from the force of gravity when standing on end. A plastic will provide the assemblage with a long useful life and a coated paper will provide the assemblage with a low manufacturing cost.

Typically, the conduits will have the same length. The length of one or more may be shortened in order to customize the assemblage for a particular use. The cross-sectional shape may be formed into any desired shape, but is typically round. The cross-sectional area of the conduits are typically the same, but can be formed to regulate the amount of each liquid reaching the mouth at the same time or to accommodate liquids of differing densities. Optionally, the cross-sectional area can be controlled dynamically by pinching the conduit walls. In this way, the proportion of liquids reaching the mouth can be changed dynamically to accommodate the tastes of the drinker.

The conduit may be longitudinally rigid or mechanically deformable by applying force. In the rigid embodiment, the conduit will maintain its longitudinal shape under a moderate amount of stress. In one deformable embodiment, the conduit does not maintain the deformed shape after the force is removed. In another deformable embodiment, the deformed shape is maintained.

The conduits are joined together while maintaining the isolation of the liquids prior to reaching the mouth. Preferably, the joint is robust enough so that the conduits remain joined together under a modest amount of stress. The joint can be anywhere along the length of the conduits The conduits are joined by either joining already existing conduits together or by forming the conduits as a single unit.

One or more of the conduits include a check valve to prevent liquid from the mouth to enter another receptacle.

Other objects of the present invention will become apparent in light of the following drawings and detailed description of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a fuller understanding of the nature and object of the present invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. **1** is a side, cutaway view of the first embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** is an perspective view of one embodiment of the joining of two conduits by interlocking;

FIG. **3** is an perspective view of a second embodiment of the joining of two conduits by interlocking;

FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view of FIG. **3** along the line **4—4**;

FIG. **5** is a side view of a configuration of the joining of two conduits by interlocking;

FIG. **6** is a cross-sectional view of FIG. **5** along the line **6—6**;

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of another configuration of the joining of two conduits by interlocking;

FIG. **8** is a perspective phantom view of an embodiment of the joining of two conduits by molding;